

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 187283

FOLLOWING REPEAT SAIGON 16730 ACTION CAN THO PHNOM PENH
INFO SECSTATE 20 SEPT

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 16730

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, VC, CB

SUBJECT: REPATRIATION OF CAMBODIAN REFUGEES

REF: CAN THO 0719: PHNOM PENH 9907

1. AID/AD/RR IS MONITORING DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING CAMBODIAN
REFUGEES IN BOTH CHAU DOC AND KIEN GIANG THROUGH GVN MINISTRY
OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND CAMBODIAN EMBASSY HERE, AS WELL AS
THROUGH HOLDREN, R&R OFFICER IN CAN THO. AD/RR REPRESENTA-
TIVE ACCOMPANIED CAMBODIAN AMBASSADOR AND GVN SOCIAL WEL-
FARE REPRESENTATIVES ON VISIT TO KIEN GIANG SEPTEMBER 18 AND
AD/RR WILL ALSO BE REPRESENTED AT MEETING IN CAN THO TO DIS-
CUSS STATUS OF CAMBODIAN REFUGEES IN BOTH PROVINCES. THIS
MEETING, CALLED BY MR 4 CG NGHI AT HEHEST OF MINISTER OF SOCIAL
WELFARE PHIEU, WAS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 20, BUT (ACCORDING TO
CAMBODIAN AMBASSADOR) HAS BEEN POSTPONED-EVIDENTLY TO NEXT
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WEEK.

2. THE CAMBODIANS TOOK THE CURRENT INITIATIVE TO REPATRIATE THESE REFUGEES. THE GVN, WHICH IS MAKING A CONCERTED COUNTRY-WIDE EFFORT TO DISENCUMBER ITS WELFARE ROLLS THROUGH RAPID RESETTLEMENT OF AS MANY AS POSSIBLE OF ITS OWN REFUGEES IS WELL PLEASED TO GO ALONG WITH IT. IT IS NOT CLEAR HERE, HOWEVER, IS WHO ON THE CAMBODIAN SIDE IS THE INSTIGATOR. THE CAMBODIAN AMBASSADOR HAS SAID HE HAS RECEIVED "SIGNALS" FROM PHNOM PENH AND THAT HIS EFFORTS "HAVE BEEN APPROVED" BY PHNOM PENH.

3. USAID DOES NOT INTEND TO BECOME AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN MOVEMENT OF REFUGEES. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF PROBLEMS OF COORDINATION WHICH HAVE ARISEN DURING PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES OF THIS SORT INVOLVING THE GKR AND THE GVN, USAID IS FOLLOWING CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY. CONGEN SHOULD FOLLOW THE SAME APPROACH, AVOIDING ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT WHILE USING ITS RESOURCES IN CAN THO AND IN THE PROVINCES TO MONITOR THE SITUATION AND ALERT US SHOULD SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS DEVELOP IN THE MAINTENANCE OR REPATRIATION OF THE REFUGEES.

4. UNHCR EXPERTISE WOULD BE USEFUL ON SEVERAL COUNTS, BUT TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE UNHCR IS NO LONGER CONSIDERING PARTICIPATION IN THE REPATRIATION OF CAMBODIAN REFUGEES. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF THE REASONS BEHIND THIS DECISION. WE AGREE ENTIRELY WITH PHNOM PENH'S RECOMMENDATION THAT UNHCR SUPPORT FOR THESE REFUGEES BE SOUGHT.
APPLING UNQUOTE RUSH

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